681 survived hardly more than 15 days of this punishment. The whip was applied publicly; the lashes, whose number was fixed by the Fama, were given with either a full swing of the arm or by the forearm only. Fines had to be paid immediately, or else the condemned was held for security until his family liquidated the debt.

672 681 The family of a man who had committed a crime or fault was held responsible and could be confiscated and sold; the confiscation of persons involved the confiscation of goods. All those who worked together under the authority of the same head could be confiscated, but not maternal uncles, paternal and maternal aunts of the culprit, nor his married relatives or those on the point of marrying. The confiscation was to the profit of the Fama who compensated the victims. Confiscation [71] of goods includes all furnishings, but not lands or dwellings.

681 Whoever was condemned to slavery had to be sold outside of the country, to the profit of the Fama. It was a practical method of ridding the land of all undesirables.

Finally, any second offender had his punishment doubled.

c. Examples of Condemnations

682 684 685 847 Homicides are condemned to death, but involuntary homicides or cases of legitimate self-defense are excused. A murderer's accomplice is subject to the same penalty as the murderer. One who receives a criminal or stolen goods is punished in the same fashion as the culprit. Rape of a child is punished by death, of a young girl by being put into irons after having paid reparations to her fiancé. A woman who puts her bastard to death will be excused, for her husband may have required her to do it; if she kills her legitimate child, she is punished by death, but not executed. A woman who has an abortion is publicly whipped; when she causes an abortion in [683 another woman, she is condemned to death. A man who usurps the title of a function to which he is not entitled is put to death, as 689] is the charlatan and the sorcerer. Theft of gold is punishable by death; theft of household objects is compensated for by a fine. If, during a brawl between two villages, a member of one village is killed, the aggrieved village designates an individual in the other village to be put to death. If there are several deaths on both side, the number of deaths in the two villages is equalized.

684 however, because the Negroes say that although the betrothed girl
836 does not belong entirely to herself, neither does she belong entirely to her fiancé; she still retains certain rights to her own person, "à ma di ban, she has not yet been given."

684 When a girl becomes pregnant, she is arraigned before the
627 family council. After a goat has been slaughtered for the family boli, she is asked the name of her partner, and if she refuses to disclose it the council of the elders is called in. She has to yield, otherwise she is tied to one of the forked sticks that support the flat terrace roof, and blows rain thick on her back.

As soon as the guilty man is named, she swears on a powerful boli (1) that she has told the truth, and the man is summoned.

1. It is almost always a Komo, a Nama, or a Kono.

Nothing is to be gained by being a perjurer; it is better to pay the fine and live. The stain on his honor is slight, and he confesses without much shame: "Tigné (that is true); né no do (it is my fault)."

The fine is between 15 and 20 francs and often between 25 and 30 francs (2), not including the sacrifice to the boli, which con-

[583]

2. The rule is that the culprit should pay the fiancé the entire bride price, or some 30 francs.

sists of two hens, two dogs, a goat, and two kola nuts. Quite often the injured fiancé has to be satisfied with the victims for the sacrifice and a small present, one to two kilos of salt, and 800 to 1,600 cowrie shells, or 1 to 2 francs. As for the child of an unmarried mother, its
●847 fate is in the hands of the grandmothers, and of the father and the
848 mother, and it quite often happens that it does not cry twice in this
567 world; to use the Bambara expression: "N'a kasira, a t'na foula ké, if he has cried, he will not do it a second time." I am speaking here of a free girl, for the child of an unmarried slave girl is welcome; it is a gain for the house, and no attention is paid to the guilty man. This is easy to understand, for is there a Negro who does not abuse his slave?

837 Such statements simply mean that there is cheating (1) on both

[833 836]

1. Onanism is very common. Married men tell you openly: "We cannot have too many children, our wives have to go to the markets, and a pregnant woman cannot do this; an b'an dabali ("we manage to avoid having children"). There are few unmarried mothers, and yet the marriage of a virgin is unusual. They have little recourse to abortion, so there is onanism on their part. "Ka bogotigi soro min te djakouma koun don i na yala, to find a young girl who has not fornicated, you will take a walk." It is true that their lovers are often children, who cannot make them mothers.

sides, for all precautions are taken to see that the /165/ mother's breasts do not dry up to avoid the possibility of her conceiving. The soungourou, the widows and divorcées, "real cradle vultures," know how much these precautions weary a young husband, and they come running in large numbers, without shame or modesty.

And while the husband absents himself from his wife for fuller enjoyment, she on her part proves easy with the men friends who visit her or whom she visits, friends who give her the desired enjoyment without ever compromising her. I would go so far as to say that [847] she is glad to find herself deserted, for she might conceive with her husband and then it would be difficult to resort to abortion, while with her friends there is greater freedom.

847 And if she conceives, a pretext is quickly found for her to go to her mother or whoever takes her place. Three fourths of the old women are past masters in abortions. Camphor in large doses is the basis of their brews, and they know how to use gold chloride for a modest fee; they know how to serve each and every one and safeguard their honor.

847 And is abortion such a great crime in the eyes of the Bambara? Less serious, surely, than one might imagine. It is very common, and when a woman passes, one may overhear from the lips of the Negroes, even those of children: "a y'i kono tigné, she has destroyed the fruit of her womb." There is nothing to teach Bambara children; [844] at eight and ten years they know everything! When one listens to their conversations and lends an ear to their songs, they always revolve around the vilest subjects.

3. The Birth of a Child

842 Before birth. -- Not only is it impossible for the Bambara to accept the idea that a man could live without a wife or a woman without a husband, they likewise cannot conceive of a home without children. They desire the pleasures of fatherhood, and a couple who are healthy or, to put it better, capable of consummating the conjugal act, /166/ quickly appeal to a diviner's knowledge, however short a time they have waited to have children. They believe that sterility is the result of sorcery or an evil spell.

833 When the husband is impotent or afflicted with an illness 847 which prevents all marital relations, his wife readily becomes unfaithful and commits adultery in order to avoid the shame of sterility. Moreover, in order not to have to face a winking eye that speaks volumes or a disdainful smile which reveals everything, the husband is indulgent and even approves her crime, at least for the first times. Let us admit quickly that he can do nothing about it, for if she cannot be unfaithful, the wife will abandon herself to loud cries, demand a divorce, and reject the man, who would himself leave her if she were in a similar situation. Without approving of such indulgence, one can understand it on the part of an unfortunate who needs to keep his cook and safeguard his honor before a people that scorns an impotent man and sees nothing amiss in adultery since it is a crime that can be redeemed.

[164] 843 If a woman who conceives is in a syphilitic condition, which is often the case, the fruit of her womb seldom comes to full term

4: Henry--250 M-5 (ca. 1900) 1910 FA8 Bambara FA8

764 There is seldom a djansa for unmarried persons, and the corpse lying in the grave does not even get branches to protect it from the earth with which it is covered. Not having had children, the young man receives his live hen and the girl her egg.

Burials of Women Who Were Pregnant or Died in Childbirth

766 The death of a woman during pregnancy or while giving birth to her child stirs the whole female population. To appease the spirits, 845 drive away the gnâma, and protect the village from another misfortune of this kind, all the excised women go to cut branches of karité (Bassia parkii) or dogora. As soon as the deceased is carried to the grave, they burst out of the village, crying and weeping. Three times they go back toward the village, waving their branches, and call out "hou" three times in shouts that disturb and chill you.

At the edge of the grave, or most often in the grave itself, a [326] blacksmith -- the surgeon of the occasion -- removes the child, tells its sex, and lays it near the mother (2). During the operation the

2. If the deceased has already been delivered, the stillborn child is wrapped in the mother's mat. The operation is performed for one who has not been delivered, less to save the child's life than to spare the deceased the disgrace of the egg. A newborn child deprived of its mother is condemned to death. It is not strangled, of course, but no woman wants to give it her breast, and the little thing dies of hunger. If a woman were to nurse it out of compassion, the spirits and gnâma would take revenge by

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causing her own child to die. A mother who has lost her child may adopt an orphan and give it her breast.

766 crowd /226/ always withdraws, and the blacksmith remains alone
845 with his assistant. When the work is done, they wash their hands on the grave itself, and the operator makes the customary prayer: "Whether the wind comes from the east or the west, from the north or the south, etc.," (see above, p. 244).

5. Sacrifices to Fetishes on the Occasion of a Death

782 Although at the time of death there is no sacrifice to the soul
764 of the deceased nor to the shades of ancestors, blood flows never-
778 less. It even flows in torrents for the Bambara are not satisfied with reddening the family boli; they stain with blood all the boli fetishes they believe to be guilty. Nor do initiates of the sects forget their deceased brothers, and for a friend who was initiated the same day as they themselves, they cannot refuse the boli a hen and a kola nut. If the deceased is the master of a fetish, its priest, or an influential person on its staff, all the initiates comply, and the sacrifice becomes general. The initiates do more; in the evening they take the god out of its temple, and all night long they mingle their wild animal shouts with the blasts of sacred horns and trumpets blown by heralds. The latter very often wear hideous horned masks on their heads and are dressed in cloaks of feathers.

761 Eighty times out of a hundred, death is attributed to a powerful
782 boli which is taking vengeance, punishing or rewarding, and in the
764 environs of Ségou the Komo, Nia, Kono, Nama, and Douga are the
778 ones who have the most deaths to their credit. When the murdering boli is known, the entire village is notified; the trousers, blouse and bed cover of the deceased, or the tafé (1) if it is a woman, are hung

1. Tafé: a rectangular piece of cloth which women wind around their bodies to cover themselves.